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Sen. Allen hears testimony by Northern Michigan downtown officials at Commerce & Labor Committee

Lansing – State Sen. Jason Allen, R-Traverse City, welcomed two northern Michigan officials to the Capitol Tuesday to testify before the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor on the importance of vital downtowns.

“Having a thriving downtown is critical for economic development, and having a framework and a plan in place is needed for that success,” said Allen, committee. “Who better to help us spur economic growth in our downtowns than community members already focused and concentrated on doing so?”

Bryan Crough, of the Traverse City Downtown Development Authority, and Jeff Lawson, Mackinaw City manager, traveled to Lansing to share their thoughts on how to create economic development in Michigan’s downtowns.

“I’m honored to be asked to represent Traverse City – to be able to explain what our needs from the state are,” said Crough, the DDA’s executive director. “It’s nice to have a direct line to the government, to let them know what’s working and what’s not.”

Having a bustling downtown is an integral part to the success of any city. Northern Michigan has been working very hard at making their downtowns a place where businesses want to locate and people want to shop and dine. With storefronts rented, jobs are created and the economy is enriched.

“We have a smaller DDA and it’s nice to have an opportunity to represent smaller areas of government,” Lawson said. “It’s an honor to come down to Lansing and hopefully share ideas good not only for Northern Michigan, but the whole state.”

(More)

Last year the Commerce and Labor Committee began a series of hearings to study the challenges facing Michigan businesses. During the course of the hearings, committee members heard that cities with vital downtowns and a solid infrastructure were preferable locations for businesses versus areas that did not have such resources.

“With suggestions from people like Brian and Jeff, we hope to keep Michigan moving forward and stay competitive,” Allen said. “To accomplish that, we must continue to provide a business friendly climate. Our downtowns and strong, vibrant city centers are paramount to the well-being of our economy.”

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